[An Old Yankee Innkeeper; His Story]

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AN OLD YANKEE INNKEEPER; HIS STORY

by

Henry H. Pratt

Three years before the invention of telephones, when he was twenty years old, Freeman C. Willis, of Plymouth, New Hampshire was an innkeeper in his own right. By the time automobiles of the modern type began to clutter up our streets and create traffic problems, he had been continuously managing hotels in New England for almost fifty years.

To talk with him, one would hardly suspect it. His hair is but little more than iron-gray; he is vivacious and dramatic, capering about on his feet with boyish agility. The years have touched him with such lightness as to leave but few outside dents. He is merry, full of the sap of life, cordial, an enjoyable acquaintance. To use a figure of speech from his long life of companionship with horses, and of love for them, he is of the Morgan type, of medium size and wiry; as he says, "a lean horse for a long race".

In 1873 he entered into partnership with his stepfather, Collins M. Buchanan, managing the Plymouth House. 2 After it burned, in 1881, they bought the Black Mountain House, a summer hotel in Compton, New Hampshire, on the Waterville Valley highway.

Part of the time, in connection with the Black Mountain House, during the '80's, a period when it was thought worth while to mention on their letterheads that the hotel was "heated by steam", and with a hint of pride that "horse cars pass the door every fifteen minutes, to and from Lake Village", they operated the Eagle Hotel in Laconia.

Then, under their management, follwed followed in order the Deer Hotel in North Woodstock, a summer hotel; the Windsor--now the Orrington--on Manchester Street in Manchester; the Hotel Weirs, another summer resort; the Fairmount Hotel at York Beach, Maine; ending with the triumph of Mr. Willis's innkeeping career at the Hotel Windham in Bellows Falls, Vermont, in 1920.

But Mr. Willis can best tell his own story.

"I was born," he said as he recalled with verve the flow and ebb of his hotel life, "in Littleton, New Hampshire. My father was Cyrus Willis--familiarly, 'Cy'-a stage driver of the old school. He owned and drove his own coaches...and he was some driver! It took quite a man to handle six horses...sometimes eight, in heavy going...of the spirited kind my father drove, up and down over these mountains, often at full gallops ahead of one of those old Abbott and Downing Concord coaches. 3 Yes, they were made in New Hampshire right down in Concord...that's where they [?] get their name.

"Some years ago I was at a fair, out in Detroit, staged by those automobile fellows. Henry Ford had a row of the old stage coaches on exhibiton, and, by gosh, there was an old Abbott and Downing among 'em...hung up on leather thorough-braces...you probably know how they made the? them . Mighty familiar it looked, I tell you.

"Fellow came along, looking over the old coaches, and another man with him.

"'Hello!" s'd he, "here's one of those old Arizona coaches!"

"Beg you pardon, sir,' I butted in, 'that's a Concord coach..Abbott and Downing.'

"He "brustled' up a little. 'Well, I reckon I know; I come from out in Arizona myself....an' I've seen a pile of 'em out there.'

"'Look here' said I, 'see that?'

"I pointed to the name-plate..I knew where to find it.

"'Well,' he admitted, straightening up, 'you're right... 'but I have seen a pile of those out there, just the same.'

"And most likely he had.

"As I said, my father ran a number of stage lines in the old days...owned his own coaches. They'd hold about twenty people..filled up...with their baggage on the rack, covered with a heavy canvas in stormy weather, and it took horses that were horses to pull 'em, over these hill... 4 and a man to drive 'em. I don't remember much about my father's runs, mlself myself ... he died when I was only six years old...but I know he had one run between here and Bristol. He used to run in to Bucklin's Hotel, there.

"Mr. J. C. Ayer...you know, the patent medicine man, down near Lowell, Massachusetts...told me a story about my father, once, which shows what kind of a man he was. Mr. Ayer said that it made such an impression on his boyish mind that he never forgot it.

"They were having some kind of a convention at Bucklin's Hotel and a lot of the stage drivers were in off their runs, down in the barroom in the basement. Stage drivers were a rugged lot...full of horse play... and noise, and they were making a good deal of disturbance... some of 'em had been drinking.

"My father jumped up on the bar...big man he was, big, I mean, not 'pusey'* ...just big.... six feet two...

"Men!' he roared at them, 'this ain't seemly...it's a disgrace...ashame...with those folks upstairs tryin' to hold a meeting...'

"He gave it to 'em right from the shoulder.

"Mr. Ayer said that whole gang flattened out as if a bucket of cold water had been dashed on them. They cocked surly eyes up a him...a little sheepish, too... but they quieted down.

"I can just remember what a big man my father was... me, toddling along beside him going up to the stables at

* Northern New Hampshire word, meaning fat.

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"The Granite", in Littleton...stretching my arm way...way up to keep hold of his hand...thinking how far up he was.

"And I do remember one other thing. He was sheriff at the time and had been after a man, somewhere...I don't remember the place, or what he had done. But father came back with him in a buggy. Leaving the man out front a minute, father dashed into the house on some errand.

"There must have been some pal following this man for one of father's men burst in:

"'Your man's gone, Cy!'

"Another buggy had drawn up alongside, on the run, the man had jumped in, and away they went.

"Hitch up Springpole,' ordered father, calmly, 'and we'll see where he's gone.'

"Springpole was father's favorite stage horse... queer name....don't know where father got it, unless it was because he was pole horse in the stage hitch.

"Not very long afterward, father and Springpole came back with his man.

"Another man told me another little story of father. This man said he was riding up to the Flume with a crowd in my father's coach, for pleasure. They all got our at the Flume and scattered about sightseeing. One by one they straggled back when they were ready.

"One man in particular made it a point to get back to the coach before the rest and father found him, big as life, sitting up in the dickey-seat, when they were ready 6 to start.

"Dickey seat? Oh, that's the seat up on the coach top, back of the driver...sort of an old-time observation platform.

"'Hey, Mister,' called out father, 'that ain't your seat. That's this lady's seat...she had it all the way up. Your seat's inside.'

"'Don't give a continental who had this seat, it's mine now. I've paid my fare and I'm going to ride where I see fit.'

"Father never wasted words in argument..with that kind of man; he had other ways. Climbing up on to the forward hub, he reached over for the man's collar, picked him neatly out of the Dickey-seat, and dropped him on the ground.

"There', said father, 'this is my coach, and if you want to ride with me, you'll have to sit where I tell you to.'

"Yes, they were a wonderful set of men, those old stage drivers. There were drivers who ran coaches for the railroad, as busses are operated now; a good many ran their private lines, like my father. Harrison B. Marden was a sort of boss driver, from Plymouth to the Profile House. George Fifield drove under him, for the railroad. There was Ed Cox--'Cuttie Cox' as they called him, ran between Bethlehem and Profile House.

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"Web Stearns ran between Littleton and Profile House. He had quite a reputation as a wit. He came to Littleton, one day, barely got his horses unhitched and into the barn, when one of them dropped dead. Some of the drivers in the barn gathered about Stearns to sympathize with him.

"'Yep,' said Stearns, 'he's dead all right; died on Morrison's Hill (about a mile and a half outside of Littleton) but I didn't have time to stop there and unhitch him.'

"I got into the hotel business by a natural route, I guess, things seemed to fit into one another... kind of a family affair. My step-father--mother married again when I was about eight years old--was a blacksmith by trade, a horseman, too...perhaps because of it. He wanted to get into the hotel business and heard of an opening out west...in New York State. He took James Callahan with him and went out to have a look at it. It was such a big, elegant hotel that he was scared of it, right off. It was one of the Erie Railroad hotels...Jim Fiske's line.

"'Too much for me,' my step-father said to E. R. Abbott, [?] who superintended this chain of hotels, 'I don't know much about the hotel business....thought I'd like to start in, though....with something I could handle.'

"'Oh, this in nothing to be afraid of,' assured Mr. Abbott, 'the [p lace?] will almost run itself. Jim Fiske'll 8 let me have anything I want to run it with; I'll get you a first-class clerk, head waiter, chef, and all the rest; it'll run itself. Don't be afraid of it.'

"But father wouldn't take it on and came home.

"When they got back, they found the old Acquamgemuck House for sale. They bought it. When they did, I bought the livery stable connected with it.

"I was eighteen years old at that time, Pretty young to go into business for myself? Well, I had been brought up with horses. My own father was a stage driver; my mother was no mean horsewomen, either---she drove a four-horse team up Mount Washington; once; my step-father was a blacksmith and owned some pretty fine horses of his own. I understood horses, and I loved 'em too.

"Still perhaps it seems young, to look back on it. We fellows went to work earlier...didn't go to school much, then. The young fellows now don't seem to want to take on business responsibilities...want to play around. ..have a good time. They don't know what it is to work. Still, I can't make any general comparisons between young folks then and now. We

had the usual share of 'lunkheads' then, I guess. But we had some pretty bright fellows too. I hired a good many, men and boys, and watched 'em grow up.

"There was one young fellow I particularly remember. He applied to me for a job as a bell-hop when 9 I was at the Hotel Weirs. He wrote me from some place he was staying..farm, I think... said he didn't know anything about the bell-hop business, but was willing to learn...was willing to do anything to learn to be bell-hop. His name was Maurice Gordon. His uncle was a preacher in Boston...Park Street Church, I think... no, you're right, 'twas the Old South Church.

"I wrote back to him that, as our season was so short, we didn't have any time to train green chaps into bell-hops. Right on the heels of that he came to see me. Said he knew he could do the job...sure of it... would I take him....he wanted the job....bad.

"So I took him on. And, boy, he turned out to be some bell-hop! Right on his job and on his toes every minute, scurrying all over the place. And the guests liked him, and he made tips...tips in plenty.

"All the tips he got he brought straight to me.

"'Mr. Willis,' he'd say, 'I want you to keep this for me... I want to save it. I've got a use for this later'.

"So I'd put it [?] in the safe for him.

"'What are you going to do with all this? ' I asked him, one day.

"'Oh, I'm going to use it.. take it back to Boston with me to start me in business some day.'

"'Humh!' I told him, 'those fellows down in the city 'll get it all away from you.'

"'No, they won't..oh, no they won't,' he assured me.

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"He didn't spend any of that money..kept saving it up every tip he got.

"Next season he came back to me. First year he made a hundred dollars, or more in tips; second season, he made a hundred more. He kept saving it all up...banked it with me.

"He took a great interest in the meat I bought for the hotel; he wanted to know where I got it, how much I paid for it, the quality of it... all about the meat-buying end of the business.

"There was a man from Boston staying at the hotel that summer, who told young Gordon to come down and see him...he'd get him a job, whenever Maurice was ready. So he went down, at the end of the season. Fellow never knew him. But that didn't stop Gordon. He went down to the market district and got a job selling meat...wrote back to me for my meat orders...said he could sell me meat cheaper than I was paying. So I sent him a trial order.

"Sure enough back came the meat, in a hurry.

"After a while I didn't hear anything more from him. It went on quite a time...a year or two, perhaps..then I received a letter from him written on the letterhead of "The Chicago Meat Company" of Boston. He'd organized a company of his own and wanted to sell me more meat,-and I let him.

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"Other meat men began to wonder where my meat orders were going...tried to find.out. I kept still.

"`You can't buy your meat...what you want.... outside of our concerns,' they told me.

"`Oh, yea, I can, I said to them.

"`You can't buy it so cheap.

"`Oh, yes, I can.'

"But I didn't let on where I got it.

"Some years went by and my little one-time bell-hop came [?] down to see me...with his wife and children. He had all the things which go with prosperity...with real money...the investment of the tips from my hotel.

"Young Gordon was the kind that knew where he was going....and when he got there. I had to smile once when his aunt came down...while Maurice was bell-hopping at the Weirs. She was a great temperance woman...all that. She saw Maurice carrying a tray, with glasses full of liquid on it, up to the rooms.

"`Why Maurice, what have you there...liquor?'

"`I don't know...they didn't tell me' the boy replied.

"`Why, Maurice, that's some kind of liquor. Do they expect you to carry liquor around the hotel? you can't stay here...you can't meddle with liquor! Why!'

"`Don't worry; I won't get hurt.'

"`But that's liquor, isn't it?'

"`I don't know what it is,' the boy said, a little peeved, `I din't ask them and they didn't tell me. They just gave me the tray and told me to carry it to room, number So-and so-; And [?] that's all I know...and I'm, Carrying carrying it.'

"I was bell-hop myself for a little while in the old Profile House, and I used to stick around where the tips were.

"I remember an old Scotchman who came [?] there once... knee pants, and the rest of the fixings...and they sent me up to his room for something. All he wanted was ice-water. I went down and got the ice-water for him.. He held out his hand and dropped a coin into mine. It was a half-dollar! You bet I hung around that Scotchman all the rest of the time he was there. I saw to it that none of the other bell-hops got ahead of me when he wanted anything.

"But I'm away off my story.

"James Callahan sold out to my uncle; I bought out my uncle's share of the Acquamgemuck House a year or so later; in 1873 there we were...my step-father and I...Buchanan and Willis, proprietors of the Plymouth House --- We changed the name from Acquamgemuck to Plymouth.

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"A lot of old-time hotel keepers started from a livery stable. I suppose that was because the livery was such an important part of the hotel business. It was a big part of the pleasure, and of the income. And a lot of people picked their hotels because they had bang-up livery stables.

"A little incident shows you what sort of a livery we carried. In the early '80's, when we were at the Black Mountain House, I ran a twelve-passenger wagon, with four horses, between Campton and Plymouth. I was waiting for the train, one day, at Plymouth, with pretty stylish turnout. The train came in ...a man got off to stretch his legs. He strolled along the platform, stopped by my team, began to look over my rig. It was worth looking at..as good as money could buy; four black horses... black ...heads right up in the air... perky...silver-mounted harnesses...wagon with straw colored running gear...carmine body... shiny....

"Your team?' he finally asked.

"I admitted it.

"'BLACK MOUNTAIN HOUSE' he read from the side of the wagon; `where is that?'

"I told him.

"'M-m-m-m; I've been staying over at the Glen House. I thought they had about as swell teams as anywhere...have that reputation. But they havn't any teams as fine as that. It's the finest team I ever saw.'

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"Puts me in mind of another amusing story... amusing to me, although the Pemigewasset House didn't find it so.

"The Pemigewasset House was railroad-owned, like several of the hotels up through the mountains in those years...Fabyans was another. The railroad ran stages from the depot to the Profile House, and private teams gave them competition...often bitter. Mine was one of the private teams that went in for a share of the business...'pod-teams' they called these private, competing teams.

"It was in 1880...before the Plymouth House burned...that Governor Natt Head came up to inspect the fish hatchery the state was operation at Livermore Falls. He had invited Governor [Long?] of Massachusetts, and with their staffs, there was quite a party of them.

"Naturally the Pemigewasset livery did its best, in the way of conveyance to Livermore Falls. They had a special rig for the two governors and the Square was full of teams for the rest of the party. The railroad people had invited in teams from all over town --- fifteen or twenty of them --- but none were invited from the Plymouth house. But my rig was there, just the same...over across the Square...nearest I could get, in the crowd.

"The train pulled in...Governor Head, accompanied 15 by Governor Long, and their crowd, got off.

"'Right this way, Governor Head....right this way; your team's right here,' indicating a team standing beside the platform.

"But the governor wasn't to be rushed; he stood for a moment looking around over the heads of the crowd on the platform.

"'Your team's all ready, here, Governor Head... for you and Governor Long,' the Pemigewasset people kept insisting, 'right here by the platform.

"'Whose team is that...over there,' pointing to my turnout, the governor asked, 'the one across the square?'

"'Oh, that's Willis...keeps the Plymouth House, around on the street.'

"'Pretty good looking team...guess I'll have a look at it.'

"He started across, flinging back over his shoulder,

"'Capable of picking my own teams, I guess.'

"'Well,' he said after inspecting my rig, `we'll take this one Mr. Willis. Hey!' He called back, `get that other team out of the way, and let this man drive up.'

"We stood a minute or two after the governors and some of their party had seated themselves.

"'What are we waiting for?' fretted Governor Head.

"'Waiting for some of the rest to get ready,' I replied.

"'Never mind about the rest,...we're ready, aren't we? Let's get going. Rest can come along when they get ready.'

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"Those four horses moved that loaded twelve-passenger wagon along like birds. The rest weren't even in sight when we came to the Baker River Bridge. There was a dip in the road there, and beyond the bridge a sharp grade to higher ground. I slackened the reins when we came to the bridges 'tchkd' to the horses, and, by gosh, they sailed up that hill to take your breath!

"At the top Governor Head turned to the Massachusetts governor:

"'Guess I'm not such a bad picker on teams after all, eh, Long?"

"We reached the hatchery, the governors made such inspection as they cared to, and we were off on our return before the rest of the party came up. Governor Head wanted to see the old Trinity Church, at Holderness, so we went back that way. He let himself in with a key that happened to fit...looked around a little while, and was leaving before the rest of the party caught up with us.

"Yes, sir, teams counted something for a hotel in those days.

"The railroad was like that...wanted all the business. One of their drivers out of Plymouth, used to try to get it for the railroad folks.

"But when we were in the Plymouth we made up our minds that we would try to get our share of it..and we did.

"I noticed two men get off the train, when I was nosing around the depot after business... nice looking men... 17 one had a fine moustache....on the way, they said, to the Profile

House. George Fifield stepped up, assuming that they were, naturally, going up by the railroad coach.

"'Gentlemen,' I butted in, 'now which would you rather do...go up through our beautiful Notch by this railroad stage, whooping at full speed, making time..or go up by a private team...same price, four dollars, each... stop along the way, when you see anything you'd like to look at...or get out now and then if you want to?'

"That idea kind of struck 'em; they seemed to think my proposition sounded good.

"But the other driver wasn't the man to let business slip out of his hands without a fight.

"'Ho,' s'd he, 'you go up by this man's teams 'n' you won't get more'n out of the village before one of the horses 'll fall down in a fit...then where 'll you be?'

"'Tell you what you do,' said I, 'my stable isn't but a little way from here...just around the corner... you come along with me and have a look at the teams I drive.'

They considered.

"'We will,' they finally agreed, 'we'll come around after supper. We're going to stop here at the Pemigewasset over night, and we'll be around.'

"True to their word I saw them coming, after supper. I met them and took them to the stables. There were eight handsome dapple-grays there...all alike...heads right up in the air...'perky'.

"`There, gentlemen, are the horses. Do you see any among 'em that look 'fitty'?'.

"They said they didn't.

"'Which are the ones you are planning to hitch up for us?'

"'They all match...any of them..or all of them, will work together...you pick out any you want.....I'll hitch 'em up.'

"'Oh, no...you do the picking...we're satisfied... we'll go up with you in the morning.'

"We started, in the morning, a little before the railroad coach got off, four horses drawing a twelve-passenger wagon, full.

"At Livermore Falls I asked them if they wanted to stop and have a look. No, they didn't.

"And so we went on, taking it easy, the grays moving at a comfortable trot, passengers looking about, enjoying themselves, until my rival came up behind with the six-horse railroad coach...and tried to pass.

"I spoke to the grays...they lengthened their stride,,..just enough to keep ahead of the other coach.

"One of the men called my attention to the coach following us.

"'I think he wants to pass you,' he said.

"'I know he does, [?] I replied, 'but I don't think he will.'

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"I let out the lines a little...gave the horses more head...and they moved out away from that coach... up those Notch grades...like birds! The roads hadn't been graded, then, for automobiles, either.

"We kept a good lead right into the Flume House. I know I had taken out my horses, and was looking after them in the barn -- I always looked after my own horses, to be sure they

got what they needed -- before the stage came in. As I came across the road back to the hotel, the boss of the coach-line was giving the man a piece of his mind.

"'.....and how do you fellows think the railroad's goin' to run these coaches...give you proper service ...if you don't patronize 'em. The railroad runs 'em for your accommodation; you've no business to hire these little pod-wagons...you ought to travel on the regular coaches.....'

"'Look here, Mister,' the doctor was replying -- I had learned, coming up, that my chief passenger was a doctor from Easton, Pennsylvania --- 'I've travelled all over the world..and I travel as I please. No driver of any railroad coach is going to tell me how to travel. You're no fit man to speak for the railroad...you're insulting.....'

"He handed him back as good as the driver sent.

"The doctor whirled to me, as I came up.

"'Going back to-night?'

"'I'm planning to...soon's I get supper...and the horses fed.'

"'Well, don't! Stay over here and take us the rest of the way to the Profile House in the morning. I was intending to go up by the railroad stage in the morning, but I wouldn't ride on this man's coaches...bah! '

"When we arrived, next day, at the Profile House, the doctor paid me the regular fare of four dollars, and five dollars extra for a tip. Seeing which his daughter called to me, "'Oh, wait a minute!'

"She ran into the hotel and came back a little later with two dollars more, which she handed me. She seemed to be afraid I hadn't had enough to pay me for the fuss.

"Seems funny, to look back on it, that when I began the hotel business there were not telephones. Imagine running a hotel to-day without telephones! I suppose it was inconvenient, but we didn't think anything about that...never had anything to make us think different.

"It was quite a while after 1876 before telephones became anyways common. We had them here in Plymouth before the Plymouth House burned,: had them up to Black Mountain House, in Campton, in the early '80's, but there were no telephones up as far as North Woodstock when we opened the Deer Park Hotel in 1887.

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"Queer way we old Yankees have of taking to new things. Walter Lee was telephone manager here at Plymouth back in the '80's, and tried to get us telephones up at Campton. In order to have a line put through we had to get enough subscribers to make it pay the company. We agreed to take one at the Black Mountain House...quite a number were arranged for by other people in town.

"Across the road from the hotel, a typical old Yankee kept a boarding house....The Hillside House. We went to get him to subscibe for a telephone...told him everybody's taking one. Guess that was a mistake.

"'Everybody's takin' one, be they?' he said after a few minutes pressure; 'well if everybody's takin' one, that's good enough reason for me not to take any....no! '

"Up at the Deer Park the stable was a hundred rods from the house...more than a quarter of a mile. It was too far to holler across, so every message we had for the stables had to be sent across by a man....or boy. It was an awful inconvenience.

"But we had a bright fellow staying with us one season who fixed us up a sort of mechanical telephone. He stretched a piece of sheepskin across a frame.... about a foot across, I should say...and fastened a button in the middle of it. He made two, one for the

house and 22 and the other for the barn, and strung a tight line from one to the other. Whenever we wanted the stable-man...or he wanted us...we would tap-tap-tap on the sheepskin, like a drum, and a man would come to the other end, and we could carry on quite a conversation. You'd be surprised. Saved a pile of steps.

"The Plymouth House burned in 1881...from spontaneous combustion....started in the attic. We had no fire department at that time, here in town. We sent to Lakeport, twenty miles away, for help. It arrived in time to save the Methodist church, next to the hotel. Folks formed a bucket line to the river. Even the women...some of the town's most prominent women.. helped pass the buckets down to the river to be filled.

"Immediately after losing the Plymouth, we... Mr. Buchanan and I...bought the Black Mountain House. It was a summer hotel, small, compared with some of the hotels in the mountains, but a beautiful house, in a beautiful spot. Here's a picture of it, on the wall."

On the wall hung a photograph of a three-story house, the upper story built with a mansard roof, surmounted by a small, square cupola, in the center. A broad piazza extended along the whole front and both ends. Over the front entrance, on a level with the second story, across the width of the piazza roof, was a generous balcony.

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"You see, here," explained Mr. Willis, indicating with his finger, "the driveway swung from the main highway to Waterville valley, in a semi-circle, in front of the main steps, and back again to the road, enclosing a large circular plot of lawn. That lawn was our croquet ground, smooth and level as a table top. We took a lot of pains with that. Croquet was one of the three big sports of that day. Croquet...croquet... croquet, all the time.

"Over here, to the right and behind the house, was a big grove of pine trees. A branch of the driveway took off to the left of the house, ran around back, underneath a long wing of the building projecting behind, and so into the grove.

"The stables were at the rear corner of that wing, running out to the left. They are out of the picture.

"Acres and acres of pine woods covered the country back of the hotel, with roadways running among them for a long distances."

In front of the piazza, scattered about the lawn, were a dozen people, or, more, in the costumes of fifty years ago.

"I told you that croquet was one of our three great amusements; the other two were dancing and wrestling.

"Dancing was a regular craze. Two or three dances 24 a week were common...in private houses, where they would dance from one small room to another and so all around the house, or in hotels. In winter big sleighrides were in order, with a hot supper waiting for them at some hotel or tavern. Then dancing... then about midnight, another supper....oysters, usually. Then more dancing, until four o'clock in the morning. Those were the days when they danced.

"They danced on spring floors....ever see one of them? I don't know how they built them, but when the crowd got going on them, they'd spring up and down... like what the boys called "bendy-bows" on the ice.

"Then wrestling...wherever you saw a crowd of young fellows together, some one would start wrestling.. and the whole crowd would be at it. Ring wrestling was the great town meeting sport. At every town meeting they'd form a ring outside, push a couple of young husky fellows into it. The winner would take on another; that winner, another, and so they'd keep it going for hours.

"There used to be a little fellow, Tommy Glisky, who was quite a chap at the town hall in Plymouth in the town meeting wrestling matches. I could watch 'em from the

hotel....diagonally across, it was.. Tommy was a short fellow.....pretty well-knit....but smallish. You'd never pick him out for a wrestler. But, by gosh, he was. There wasn't anybody could beat him. Lick 25 everybody, he would....everybody. Pitch into 'em, no matter how big they were...lick 'em every time. He was a lumberjack....had some tricks he'd learned in the woods....I don't know what they were.

"We kept telling Glisky that some day he'd meet his match; if he kept pitching into everybody, some day he'd get hold of a fellow that would trim him. But he'd laugh, and go right on licking 'em...till he ran up against Sullivan.

"Big Irishman...Sullivan was. He came up with the track gang that was building the Pemigewasset Valley Railroad. He had a brother, I remember, but I don't know what the given name of either one of them was.

"'Twas one of those everlasting dances brought Glisky and Sullivan together....up at the Grafton House, in West Thornton. Sleighloads of people came in from all over....a big crowd of them, that night. Glisky had brought along a bunch of girls; one of my men had gone up from the Black Mountain House; a lot of young fellows....and Sullivan.

"It started over a cotillion Glisky was forming. Sullivan butted in and told him he wasn't doing it right.

"'You get out o' here, mind your own business,' retorted Glisky, "I know how to form a cotillion.'

"'All right, if that's the way you feel about it,' said Sullivan, 'you go ahead. You make up your cotillion on this side of the hall, and I'll make up mine over on the other side.'

"Tommy couldn't stand that sort of thing...before the girls, and all, so he came over to Sullivan .. said something to him..must have been fighting talk, for Sullivan let drive at him. Glisky replied in kind, and the fight was on, right then and there.

"A terrible fight it was....girls screaming... those two brutes fighting for all there was in them... right in the middle of the dance floor. But Sullivan licked him...walloped the daylights right out of him! Glisky managed finally to break away and ran..down stairs (the hall was on the top floor...fourth, I think, and out of doors.

"The dance broke up at once. Some of the boys got hold of Sullivan and rushed him down stairs into the kitchen...or barroom.

"'You got to get out o' this,' they told him, 'this ain't the last o' this...not with Glisky it ain't. He'll come back lookin' for you...and you want to be somewhere else....then.'

"The boys hung around, sort of keeping gaurd guard over Sullivan, until they were sure that Glisky had gone off. They wouldn't let Sullivan go out.

"But Glisky didn't go. He sat out in a sleigh with some pal of his that had come over with him, and waited...waited.

"Sullivan was still sitting up on the bar, getting ready to go home, when..bang!...the door opened and in 27 came Glisky... and rushed for Sullivan.

"He had just time to scream, 'Look out, boys he's got a knife! ' before Glisky struck. He slashed the Irishman in the throat...wicked...cut his windpipe half in two, before anybody could stop him, and got away in the excitement.

"The doctor was called...rushed in...tied up Sullivan...pasted him together with some bandages... patted around his throat with his fingers...said he guessed he'd be all right.

"But Sullivan wasn't all right. He kept bleeding inside, and in a couple of days he was dead.

"My step-father, Mr. Buchanan, was deputy sheriff that year, and they sent for him. He did what he could... but Glisky had totally disappeared. Somewhere they found a picture of him and Mr. Buchanan sent it into Boston and asked the help of the Boston police in finding him. They sent copies of that picture all around, but Glisky had completely disappeared.

"It must have been pretty near a year after this when the Boston police sent up word that Glisky had been located...out in the woods of Michigan. They said they would have him arrested, and would produce him, for $500.

"But Sullivan didn't leave any money behind him; his brother didn't have any...couldn't raise $500, and the town wouldn't. The town was awful poor; they said 28 Sullivan and Glisky weren't local fellows..just transients.... and they couldn't see why they sould should put up any money for 'em.

"As a general thing people stopping at the summer hotels had very little to do with the people of the town. They were a little separate colony, by themselves. They rather looked down on the townpeople; the townsfolks considered the summer people strangers...transients...not of much account to the town, one way or the other. Even among themselves the hotel guests were 'clicky'. A group of them, who came together, would keep together while they were there. The town never benefited much from them, as I could see...not as a rule. There were exceptions, though, like Mrs. M. T. Goddard.

"Mrs. Goddard was the wife of Dr. M.T.Goddard, of Newton, Massachusetts. She seemed to have a lot of sympathy for people in distress, wherever she found them. She told me that she and the doctor, whenever they heard of a disaster anywhere near them; always

drove out at once to see if they could be of any help. Doctor never charged anything for such services, and never waited to be called.

"Down at Campton lived a young woman who had consumption. Mrs. Goddard was much concerned for her; she thought it would do her a lot of good to get out among the pine woods. She would have me, quite often, hitch up and drive her over to see this young woman. 29 She'd take her into the carryall and have me drive all along the roadways among the pines back of the hotel. When we came to an open sunny spot, where the pines were smelly, she'd have me stop for a long time. She would visit with the young woman...have real cheerful talks with her....all afternoon, maybe. She probably did this woman a lot of good.

"I understood she helped a lot down at the local church....seemed to want to do good with her money. There weren't so very many like her, though.

"Yet people were free spenders enough, in those days for their own pleasure. Infact, I think they were freer spenders than after automobiles came in.

"The tips to hotel servants were larger, for one thing. Where they give a dime now, they gave a quarter then. They didn't cut up their offerings into so many little pieces. I've told you about the old Scotchman giving me a half-dollar tip for a pitcher of ice-water at the Profile House. That's an example of it.

"It made a lot of difference, too, where people came from. Take New York,...people from there never asked the price. What they wanted they got, and found out the price afterward. They'd write in for reservations... 'have you a room with south exposure?' or rooms, in suite, with west exposure?' or whatever they wanted. They might [?] ask for our booklet, with rates, but they'd make their reservations, anyway, whether they knew the priee price or not.

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"But Boston...just as fine people, everyway, but they always wanted to shop around...to know the price of everything before they ventured...peek over the stock, so to speak, and finally decide.

"We found that people with real money...used to wealth for generations...were much less critical than those with just about money enough to squeeze out their expenses at the hotel for a couple of weeks or so and leave themselves enough at the end to get home on. [?] To the people of established wealth everything was all right -- service fine, food excellent, beds of the best, everything satisfactory....couldn't be better. But the other kind were constantly afraid they wouldn't get their money's worth. They took it out on the waiters, the porters, the clerks....always complaining about the quality of everything ...nose up in the air.

"There was Charles L. Raymond, for instance, president for a number of years, of the Chicago Board of Trade, who used to come out to the Deer Park hotel, summer after summer....bring three or four servants with them...stay all summer. He was so careful that the hotel didn't lose anything on his account.

"I had a laugh with him one day. He ate in our private dining room; and the girls were always polishing... polishing... on the windows..big windows they were. One day Mr. Raymond was at table and happened to see his son run by the window, outside, in a way that attracted his curiosity. He jumped from his chair, rushed to the window, 31 and stuck his head out...but he stuck it right through the glass. The window was closed.

"`He came into the office later, a bit crestfallen.

"'Mr. Willis,' he said, 'I want to pay for that window.'

"'What window?' I asked him.

"He explained.

"`Oh, that's all right,' I told him, 'as far as we are concerned. It's you that got hurt.'

"'Didn't hurt me any; but...a hotel that keeps its windows so clean that I can't tell whether they've open or shut I ought to pay...I want to pay.'

"Speaking of those old rocking chairs we're sitting in...they are comfortable old chairs, aren't they? They don't seem to make such chairs now-a-days...fit your back and arms just right. That little chair over there, is my wife's favorite chair. It's a hundred years old or so... more or less.

"The other day a lady was in here...saw that little mirror on the wall, up there....the one with the Dancing Girl, in the black and gold frame...said it was worth three hundred dollars. She probably wanted to compliment us, or something. I don't believe she'd offer that much for it, if she wanted to buy it.

"No, I don't know anything about old-fashioned furniture. But I did buy an old grandfather clock once. I spied it out in a farmhouse, when I was at Black Mountain. 32 It was very ornamental, had a lot of gilt on it, and spires and knobs and such. I wanted it.

"'How much will you take for the clock?' I asked the man.

"'Why, I dunno,' said he, 'dunno just what 'tis worth...reely.'

"'Twenty-five dollars, say?'

"'Oh, no-no, wouldn't sell it for that..would we, Ma?' turning to his wife. She seemed to agree in his refusal.

"'Would you sell it for fifty dollars?'

"His eyes kind of lighted up...he considered a minute "'I dunno...dunno's we want to sell at all, do we, Ma?'

"'Why I dunno....I dunno's we reely need it..I suppose we could get along without it...fifty dollars, you say?

"'I'll give you fifty dollars for it' I said.

"'Fifty dollars...well, I dunno...fifty dollars sounds fair...don't it Ma? I dunno, I 'spose we might 's well let you have it...fifty dollars...yes, you can have it for fifty dollars.'

"I took it back and set it up in the Hotel.

"That next summer a man came up from New York. He looked as if he could afford anything he wanted....and he wanted that clock. He asked we what I'd sell if for.

"Hundred dollars,' I told him.

"'Oh, no-no...couldn't give a hundred dollars for it,' he refused, 'couldn't afford that...out of the question.'

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"I said no more..let it set.

"But he kept on looking at it...wanting it. The day he was leaving he asked me about it again.

"'Well,' said I, 'you've been a pretty good customer of mine...we're pretty good friends...and all...I'll make it eighty dollars to you.

"He snapped it up quick, and went away mighty tickled.

"There came on such a rage for buying old grandfather clocks about that time that a concern somewhere down Boston way set out to meet the demand. They made 'em so near like the genuine that it took a pretty good expert to tell the difference. Then they

brought them up here into the country to sell 'em. Rackets? Oh, they aren't anything new... nor confined to the city. These fellows went around to the farmhouses, and back country places, and offered to set one of these clocks in their homes...give them the use of it while 'twas there...with the understanding that whenever antique hunters came along, they were to be allowed to see it... sort of accidental, like.

"The farmer would, naturally, hang off about letting it go....but finally, the makers and the farmer would split on whatever amount they could stick the antiquer for. They sold a lot of 'em.

"Antiques...and souvenirs! I took a party over to Crawford Notch once...they wanted to visit the Willey House. ..a party of women, it was. You've heard all about the Willey Slide, of course-how the whole Willey family was 34 destroyed over a hundred years ago, by a landslide which came down from the mountain behind the house....how the family ran out of the house and was buried, while the slide split and didn't hit the house at all....went both sides of it.

"A lot of legends clustered about that house afterward. One told about an old, crippled Grandma Willey who couldn't rush out with the rest, but remained in her rocking chair...and was safe.

"True or not, Azariah Moore, who kept the Willey House at the time of our visit, capitalized on that legend.

"At the time we were there an old, battered, hacked up rocking chair occupied a prominent place in the middle of the living room. The women were curious about the disreputable-looking chair.

"'Why, that's old Grandma Willey's rocking chair.. one she set in...time o' the Slide...ain't you never heard about it?' asked Azariah.

"They never had...so Azariah told them.

"'The reason that chair looks so,' he went on to explain; 'is because everybody who knows that story wants a souvenir of it. They wanted 'em so bad they got to hackin' out chips with their knives, behind my back...anyway, to break off a piece to carry away...bid fair to destroy the old chair, in spite of me. So finally I thought I might as well let 'em have a piece, and come by it honest, so I gave 'em a hatchet and told 'em to help themselves. 35 They did...liberal....and that's why the old chair looks so'.

"'And may we have a piece, too,' begged the ladies.

"'There's the hatchet...in the corner..go ahead.'

"While they were busy getting each of themselves a souvenir chip from Grandma Willey's chair, Azariah crooked a finger at me from the barroom door. I went out.

"'You see, Willis,' he told me, softly closing the door behind me, 'when I found summer folks was so possessed to lug away souvenirs of everything they saw up here, I got to providin' 'em ....handy. I buy them old Grandma Willey chairs...new...bang 'em up...hack 'em up, for a starter...make 'em look pretty old and dilapidated, provide the hatchet...an' they do the rest. That's the third Grandma Willey chair they've had this season. Oh, yes, they pay me a little sumthin'....a quarter a chip's the usual price.'

"That was too good to keep, so I told the women about it when we were driving home.

"Laugh....how they laughed....even with the joke on them.

"At the Weirs used to be an Indian village. Indians from miles around used to come there and get fish...and they find a great many arrow heads around there.

"At a banquet I gave at the Hotel Weirs, once, I furnished, at each plate, a souvenir of an Indian arrow head. The guests seemed mightly mightily 'pleased with them...took them

carefully away with them. I was very glad to have them...they were made by a firm out west. But they were a perfect imitation.

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"A while back we were speaking of the three great sports we had in the old days. Perhaps I ought to add another amusement to those...driving through the mountains. No summer hotel would have amounted to anything without a bang-up good livery, equipped for mountain travel, [?] attached.to it.

"Back when Mr. Buchanan and I ran the old Plymouth House, one of the great occasions was to get a crowd together and drive up on the Mt. Prospect for a picnic supper. You couldn't get there with an automobile. The road that led up there was a country, pasture road, through a couple of bar-ways....not too good, even then.

"And driving with horses you can see something... look around...enjoy the scenery. Just think what a lot of business the horse brought to the hotels that they don't get now. We had a whole lot of trade among ourselves...we hotel proprietors.

"We'd frequently take parties out driving through the mountains...sometimes be gone a week. That meant stopping over each night at some hotel, perhaps a twelve passenger load of us. And it meant putting up the horses, too. They'd come to my hotels in the same way. That meant a lot of business, right among ourselves, to say nothing of the income from a houseful of guests all summer.

"But that's gone...the horse is gone...the four-horse ...six-horse rigs, spanking teams, silver mounted harnesses, head plumes, carryalls...twelve-passenger wagons, coaches,....carmine bodies, yellow wheels,...all gone. 37 Roads up through these mountains, once gay with flashing rigs, have nothing more now than business-looking automobiles.

"The automobile will travel in a day the distance it took a horse a week; you leave home in the morning, make a trip of three hundred miles....be back at night. All the business there is for the hotel in that is nothing more than a meal or two, perhaps not that.

"There comes into my mind a trip I had with Mrs. Goddard. She loved those trips over the mountain roads. We started with a carryall---'sundowns' some called them -and two horses, one white, the other black. The black was just about the most beautiful horse I ever owned. He was black...not brownish, or blue-like, but black. The white horse beside him showed him off. His tail nearly swept the ground; he had two white feet, behind; had a white star in his forehead...neck arched.... bright eyes. The man I bought him of gave $500 for him. He had been broken to saddle, and was easy- gainted gaited as a cat.

"'Now,' said Mrs. Goddard, as she got herself well settled in the carryall, 'if the servants, at the hotels where we stop, deserve it--if they wait on us and serve us well, as you know they should, you "purg "* them. [?] "Purg" them all they deserve and add it to my bill.'

"She was like that.

"'Yes, ma'am, I promised; I'll 'tend to-it.

"We wandered over the mountain roads, taking it

* Word used in North Country hotels to mean "tip". 38 easy; stopping where night overtook us, enjoying the trip.

"I especially remember one stop me made at Jackson...at The Wentworth. General Wentworth did the honors.... he was a rather pompous man....liked to have you call him, "General"....made us right welcome.

"After supper he hunted me up.

"'Let's take a walk out to the stables...look around.'

"We walked out.

"'I wanted to see that horse,' he said. One of my boys tells my you've put into my stables the finest horse that ever went through my barn door. I want to see him'.

"I took him out, and paraded him around the barn floor.

"'He's right,' the general said, at last, 'the finest horse that ever went through that barn door!'

"When I offered to pay my bill, in the morning:

"Not a cent, Mr. Willis...you can't pay me one cent.'

"It was at the Black Mountain House that I first met Augustus Hemenway...you know, the man who built the gymnasium for Harvard College. That cost $175,000, I understand.

"He was a great horseman...had a splendid stable in Boston, although I didn't know it, at the time. I didn't know anything about him, in fact, until he came up one summer just at the close of the season, and wanted to 39 stay with us a [?] while He had his wife with him, and her nurse.

"'I don't believe we can take care of you, Mr. Hemenway,' I said, 'we're closing up for the season, letting our help go; I don't see how we can.'

"That's all right,' he rather pleaded, 'like it all the better for that. We want to be alone...by ourselves....nobody around. We can get along fine, if you'll take us for a while.'

"We arranged with him, and he certainly did enjoy it. It was just the place for sick people.

"Mr. Hemenway was a very unassuming man; I never suspected at first that he was worth what you would call "money". A little incident raised my suspicions of it.

"He used to love roaming about the stables, looking at the horses....especially my long-tailed black. They were a handsome lot....some black, some gray, some dapple-gray, matched in different teams...red halters on them...perky-looking horses.

"I was out there, one morning, in the carriage room, polishing up some fancy harness, with the door open. It swung outward, toward woods, Mr. Hemenway was out, as usual, visiting the horses. A partridge came 'zooming' along full speed,...struck the opened door, and broke its neck.

"Why...you have partridges up here as thick as all that?' Mr. Hemenway cried, a little startled.

"'Oh, the woods are full of 'em,' I told him, 'just full of the them .' That was back in the '80's you remember.

"'Well,' he said, 'I'm going in to telegraph my man to bring up my dog and my gun; you and I will go hunting.'

"I noticed that; he said 'bring' not'send'. If it had been me, I should have had 'em sent, by express. I began to suspect he was more than I thought.

"The next day, up came the man with gun and dog. Soon as he'd had his dinner Mr. Hemenway sent him back home again.

"'Now, Mr. Willis, we're ready. You know where the birds are, don't you?'

"I said I did.

"The dog nosed around, here and yon, until soon he stiffened into a point, his nose sniffing out for the bird.

"'Now, Mr. Willis, you stand right over there; he'll likely come down somewhere near you, and if I don't get him, you try him.'

"He waited a moment.

"'All ready?' 'Flush him! he snapped at the dog.

"Pouf" up came the bird.

"'Bang!' went Hemenway's gun,...never touched a feather.

"The partridge scaled down past me, and I dropped him at the foot of a tree.

"'Get him?' called Hemenway, all excited.

"'There....at the foot of that tree.' I pointed to the dead bird.

"He was so delighted at my shot that he couldn't seem to get over it.

"'Wonderful shot! Great shot,' 'he complimented me.

"Mr. Hemenway wandered into the woods ahead of me and I lost sight of him for minute or two. Then the dog broke out, barking and growling and Mr. Hemenway smashed through the brush on a run.

"'Got a bear,' he called, 'dog's got a bear up a tree."

"We went back to the dog.

"When I saw what was in the tree, I grinned.

"'I'm sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Hemenway, but that isn't a bear, it's a porcupine.

"It did look like a small bear, though; it was all black on its belly, and a monstrous porcupine.

"'First time I ever saw one of those fellows,' said Mr. Hemenway, pleased as anything; 'you hold the dog and let me go up and shoot him.' I had told him to get the dog before the porcupine came down.

"'No!'

"He looked at me a little surprised.

"'Well, I'll hold the dog and you go up and shoot him.'

"'No!"

"He was surprised then.

"'No,' said I, 'you hold the dog and we'll both go up and shoot him.'

"'Oh, I see, ' doubtfully.

"If that dog gets near a porcupine that isn't quite dead, or noses one that is dead, he'll get himself stuck full of quills and he'll die unless they are torn out with pliers. You see, they are set with little barbs and they keep working their way further and further into the animal until they kill him.'

"'Oh, I understand, now.'

"We blew the porcupine out of the tree. I went on... missed Hemenway. I looked back...and, [?] by gosh, he was stooping over that porcupine, pulling out some little quills with a pair of pliers, and tucking them into his pocket book for souvenirs.

"Mr. Hemenway got to be pretty close friends with me after that...seemed to think quite a lot of me.

When it came time for him to leave he wanted to go home around the mountains another way. I drove them up to the Flume House; the next day we went on to Richardson's, in Franconia; then on to Bethlehem. He had been admiring my long-tailed horse so much I thought 'twould please him if I hitched him up as one of the pair.

"He noticed his easy gait. I told him the horse had been broken to saddle. He didn't say much then... quiet man, Mr. Hemenway was...not much given to words... but when we got to Bethlehem he wanted to take the horse 43 out under saddle.

"'I don't know, Mr. Hemenway; 'that horse hasn't a mean thing about him, but he's awful lively...full of spirit. It needs a man who knows how to ride to handle him.'

"'That's all right...that's all right,' he said very quiet. 'I'd like to try him out, just the same... if you're willing.'

"I wasn't quite sure about it, but next morning, early, I went out to the stable and asked the boy if he had a saddle. He had....and a good one. I wiped the horse off with a damp cloth until he shone like a glass bottle.

"I went out to help Mr. Hemenway start.

"'That's all right, Mr. Willis, 'I can manage.'

"He had one foot in the stirrup and was on his back like a cat. The horse was through the barn door like a shot, and they were off. I saw in that minute that Mr. Hemenway was a horseman.

"He was gone about half an hour.

"He paid me there, for the return trip and everything, and went back to Boston another way.

"The next day I had a telegram from him.

"'Give you so-much for the horse.'

"I wired back my refusal.

"Right away came another telegram.

"'Give you so-much, or...name your price.'

"I hated to let that horse go; he was one [?] 44 in a thousand. But I wired back my price.

"Another telegram cam, 'Done, Will you guarantee to deliver him safe and sound at Boston?'

"'No, I wired, 'will guarantee to deliver him, on board at Plymouth, safe and sound, that's all I will do.'

"Mr. Hemenmay telegraphed back to bring him along to Boston; his groom would meet me there.

"And then I learned all about Mr. Hemenway. He had big stables; his mother had big stables too...high class horses.

"Later on he wanted me to get a horse just like that for his mother's stables...at any price...but I couldn't find a horse like that, in all the country round...couldn't fill the order.

"We wanted a year-round hotel to run along with the Black Mountain House....had a chance to buy the Eagle Hotel, in Laconia, and took it. Soon after we bought the Eagle Hotel, the Black Mountain House burned..in October, I think. We had just closed up for the season and had a man and his wife living there in a few rooms where they would be comfortable for the winter.

"That was in 1885. In 1886 Hon. Samuel N. Bell began building the Deer Park Hotel, in North Woodstock. He came to us, in Laconia, and wanted to have us advise him about it....sort of tell him about summer hotels. He said he was going to make it as fine a hotel as money could build.

"Mr. Bell used to come up summers to the Profile House; we scraped an acquaintance in rather incidental ways. He'd be sitting on the piazzas I stopped with parties, or drove by, and he'd wave his hand, or 'hello' to me..genial man was Mr. Bell.

"As we went on with him building the Deer Park he got to telling us to have it just as he wanted it..not to spare expense...make it the finest hotel, as it was to be ours eventually.

"'Have it just as you want it, boys; it's going to be yours, some day...make it as you want it.'

"That's the way he'd talk.

"'I've got a brother, John you know,' Mr. Bell would explain, 'but he don't want any such proposition as this...don't want to be bothered with such things. He's scraped together a heap of money...all he wants...and he just wants to sit on it and be let alone. You've the men to have this thing.'

"We opened the Deer Park Hotel in the season of 1887...June 20 was as always our opening day. It was crowded to overflowing that first season. Mr. Bell enlarged it for the next season...doubled it.

"And then...my wife died...leaving me with five little children. If it hadn't been for Mr. Bell I'd have gone under. I was discouraged clear to the bottom. I told Mr. Bell I didn't have the heart to go on with his proposition.

"Like a father , Mr. Bell talked to me.

"'Now-now, Willis,' he said, 'You don't want to give up...work is the only thing that'll do you any good. Don't lie down by the roadside...you've got five little children to look after. You can't leace leave me now...even for your own sake.

"He kept on holding me up like that...brought me out of the shadow again. They don't make men any finer than Samuel H. Bell. I'll never forget him and what he did for me.

"Mr. B?ll Bell was planning to enlarge the hotel again the next season...double it again, he said...when he dropped dead...right in my arms.

"A little incident comes into my mind which will show you how Mr. Bell did business...the sort of man he was to work for.

"He wanted a path made to the spring for [?] his guests. He wanted all the brush cut away; even the roots taken out....everything smoothed away so the dresses of the ladies wouldn't catch on anything as they walked over it. He was a wonderful calculator in his head...never needed to use a pencil and paper.... could estimate very close on the number of cubic yards of earth needed for a fill, and such like. He had a pretty close idea how much that path ought to cost, and when a man figured it out for him at a hundred dollars, he told him, right off, to go to work.

"The man did an extra fine job. He cleared out every little stub, smoothed the walk off smooth, took 47 great pains with it.

"When he had it all done Mr. Bell inspected it.

"'Fine job,' he said, 'fine job. Here's fifty dollars extra for your pains.'

"Perhaps you'd like to see for yourself what the Deer Park was like. I've been giving you a lot of stuff...more'n you'll ever have patience to write, likely. Here, somewhere, I've got a booklet of the old Deer Park."

He looked in his desk and produced a booklet of the Deer Park Hotel, prepared for the season of 1894.

On the front cover was a picture of the hotel, in color--a building upward of three hundred feet long, three stories high, surmounted by two ornate observation towers, with pointed roofs, one flying the National flag, the other, the burgee of the hotel.

"Mr. Bell had his rooms up in one of those towers," explained Mr. Willis.

Beyond the hotel, row behind row, rose the tumbled peaks of the Franconia Range. In the foreground the terrain fell away from the high plateau on which the building was placed, through beautifully wooded grounds toward the village of North Woodstock. Spacious grounds surrounded the house and a piazza "twelve feet wide," according to the booklet, "extends entirely around the house."

"That piazza," Mr. Willis explained, "was an eighth of a mile in total length."

Regarding the view to be had from North Woodstock the booklet stated, on its first printed page:

"Looking north from the depot(about seventy-five rods from the hotel) you can see Mt. Cannon, or Profile Mountain, Eagle Cliff, Lafayette, Lincoln, Haystack, Liberty, Flume, Big Coolidge, Little Coolidge Mountains. On the east, Whaleback, Patash, Hancock, Loon Pond, and Russell Mountains. On the south, Plymouth Mountain and twenty-five miles down the Pemigewasset Valley. On the west, Mounts Moosilauke, Jim, Blue, and Kinsman, forming the finest mountain and valley scenery in New England."

The booklet spoke of the east, middle, and west branches which joined just below the hotel to form the Pemigewasset River as being "inhabited by beautiful speckled trout in great abundance, making the finest fishing resort in the state," and stated that the "long talked of Moosilauke road is almost completed...distance from Deer Park to the top of Moosilauke, fourteen miles," a comfortable drive for picnic parties, with teams from the "good stable, well-equipped for mountain travel."

"Twenty horses, we had in that stable," commented Mr. Willis.

"Lest prospective guests" might fear annoyance from the odors from the stable it was stated to be 49 "one hundred rods from the house."

For additional amusements were offered billiard and pool tables, bowling alleys, but there were no golf links, and no special dance hall. "The dance craze, as the '70's and '80's had known it, was dead , " Mr. Willis said.

The sanitary arrangements were "as near perfection as can be obtained, everything discharging into the Pemigewasset River; pipes trapped and ventilated, " and the water supply "abundant....from Loon Mountain, through a three-inch pipe, with hydrants on either side of the house...a head of one hundred and fifty feet."

The main dining room was at the left of the house, the office in the middle, the parlors at the right end.

As to interior equipment the booklet continues:

"The house is furnished throughout without regard to expense. The office, halls, and dining room are finished in oak, the parlors in white wood...the halls are nine feet wide...steam heat on the first and second floors, gas throughout the house."

"That gas," Mr. Willis explained, "was shipped up from Boston in barrels and dumped into a big underground tank behind the house....gasoline, it was. We had a machine in the cellar which pumped it in and evaporated it into gas and sent it through the pipe lines, in the house, to the burners. We used those little white things to drop over the burners..yes, that's it... 50 ....Welsbach mantles. And we had big fireplaces on the first floor...three of them. The biggest one was in the office....and it was a huge one. When Dr. J.A. Greene was up there once he wrote to a friend of his that we drove a yoke of oxen right through the front door, dragging in a whole tree, and dumped it onto the fireplace, driving the oxen out the big door at the back. Dr. Greene was a great joker."

Returning to the booklet:

"Our beds are made of the best South American hair, forthy forty pound mattresses. The house will accommodate two hundred guests.

"There are fine groves of beautiful trees of all kinds around the hotel.

"Five hours ride from Boston without change of cars. Parlor cars direct from Boston without change. Fare, round trip, $6.30.

"Our prices will be from $14 to $21 per week, according to length of stay and total number in room. Transients, $3.50 per day."

The booklet was beautifully illustrated with excellent reproductions of photographs and art work, and ended with a fine photograph and description of Bell's Cascade,-a wild, tumbling

rush of water, in the then little known region back of the hotel---named in honor of the builder of Deer Park.

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In this description we can see one of the best summer hotels among the mountains, in the "Gay Nineties".

It had electric bells throughout, but no telephones; a barber shop, bath rooms, a laundry, but no beauty parlor; it had billiards and bowling, but neither golf links nor tennis courts.

"We had no golf links until the Hotel Weirs," continued Mr. Willis, 'we didn't have much, then, but enough to advertise on.

"Tennis courts we added to the Deer Park just before I left it. Charles L. Raymond's son helped us lay them out, and supervised their construction. he also supervised a tennis tournament we held there, on the new courts. They were very fine ones.

"Those big men who used to come up to our summer hotels were nothing but big, hilarious boys, out on a vacation. They made a lot of fun for the folks. I remember I. Lowell Pratt * ....know him?...came from Boston He was a great cut-up.

"A hurdy-gurdy man wandered up to The Deer Park one summer, perhaps expecting to be hailed by homesick city folks.

"A man on the piazza cut him pretty short.

"`Hey, you, get on out of here! We hear enough of that in the city, without you bringing it up here.

* Name of man mentioned is: "I. Lowell Pratt"

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Here, here is a dollar....go on, now....across the river....play somewhere else.'

"The crestfallen fellow took himself off with his hurdy-gurdy.

"But I. Lowell Pratt wasn't long in hearing of it. He rushed around back, found a horse and buggy hitched up out there 'we usually kept one ready for errands) got a man to drive him and set out after the hurdy-gurdy man.

"'Hey, you,' he called; when he overtook him, 'what you doing down here? Thought you were up at the hotel, making music for the boys.'

"The perplexed Italian explained.

"'Da man up at-a hotel tell-a me 'Get out o' here...give-a me dollar to get out.'

"'Oh, I see; her here ' stripping a two-dollar bill off his roll, and giving it to the man, 'go on back to the hotel and play 'em two dollars' worth of music.'

"The poor fellow readily enough went back and started on his contract.

"'Hey, you!' his original tormentor rushed at him, 'Didn't I give you a dollar to stay out o' here? What you back for?'

"'Dis-a man,' naively indicating Pratt, 'give-a me two dollar --- tell-a me come back.'

"I used to have 'to take it' myself once in a while.

"Had a party of ladies, driving them up through the Notch one day....stopped at the Flume House. On the piazza was Col. Butler, a Boston wholesale liquor dealer, and a Mr. Blake. We were pretty well acquainted. in those days a lot of people came back to those hotels year after year....regular thing....and we got well acquainted.

"Seeing me with a party of ladies, Col. Butler called out:

"'Hey, Willis, what do you say to coming up and having a little nipper...eh?'

"'No,' I declined, 'I'm very much obliged to you...guess I won't to-day.'

"One of the women spoke right out:

"'There! I'm glad there's one man that knows enough not to drink....at least, when he's driving.'

"Mr. Blake had slipped into the hotel and came back with two whiskey glasses in his hand, one half-full, the other full, of what I took to be gin.

"'Come on, Willis, here you are.'

"Well, it made me a little huffy to have that old snifter speak right out in public, the way she did, so I stepped up to the piazza and took the half-glass ...and downed it.

"'Twas nothing but water.

"The other ladies turned on the old snifter and gave her a ha-ha, to see me drink.

"Then I reached for the full glass, and downed that.

"That was water, too.

"And the ladies ha-ha-ed some more.

"On the way home I told the party what was in the glasses; then the old snifter ha-ha-ed.

"That was the way in the old days...we hotel men got pretty well-acquainted with our guests. They came back to us year after year. They came, often in families, with some of their servants...or perhaps a nurse... and settled down with us for the summer..made the hotel their home for the summer.

"Most of our patrons came from fairly near by.... most of them from New England. Some came from New York, a few from Pennsylvania, Chicago, or even farther west. But they didn't swarm into New England from all over, the way they do now.

"When people travelled then, they had very definite reasons for it, very definite places to go to. There wasn't this restless going for the sake of going. The automobile brought in that, the automobile and the hard-top roads that have been pushed out everywhere. People were much more local...more stay-at-home, unless 55 something necessary called them out.

"And people expected to pay their bills. We found people that came to our hotels generally honest. Very rarely did we have a bad bill, never a robbery, but once. That was at the Hotel Weirs.

"They were having a musical convention there and the hotel was full, except at the time of the meetings.

"We noticed there were two women who never went out to the meetings; they stuck pretty close to the hotel. We didn't think much about it, until guests began to complain about missing valuables from their rooms. Then we started some detective work. The women, and a doctor, who had been rooming out in the town and who never came to the hotel disappeared. We never could find any evidence to pin anything on them, or arrest them but we did get pretty good evidence that these two women were working the hotel for this doctor ....some said they were kept-women of his...they went off together...at the same time...anyway.

"But they were not our native folks...came from down Providence ways somewhere...cheap crowd.

"But, as I said, we found our hotel guests generally honest. We occasionally had a bother with bad checks, mostly due to carelessness about overdrawing their accounts....drummers * were the worst about this... but they always made them good. It was easy for a drummer to carry around a checkbook; 'Oh, Willis, you know me' `little short of cash to-day'...'let me

* Traveling-salesmen. They "drummed up trade."

have some money on this check, will you?' They didn't keep up their bookkeeping. But that wasn't dishonest....just careless.

"After we got through with the Deer Park we managed the Windsor Hotel, in Manchester....the Orrington, it is now,...until I went to the Weirs..to manage the Hotel Weirs, for the Weirs Hotel and Land Company. And there I got in with a unique character among New Hampshire hotels...Dr. J.A. Greene, of "Greene's Nervura."

"Dr. Greene and I were pretty well acquainted when I went to the Weirs. He used to come up to Deer Park a lot...he and his brother-in-law, George W. Armstrong...you know...the man who built up Armstrong's restaurants...in the depots,..he married Dr. Greene's sister.

"Dr. Greene had built him a place over on Long Island, in Lake Winnipesaukee, in the form of a castle... big place, and cost a lot of money. But Dr. Greene had it. He made millions....literally millions, out of that Nervura. I asked him once if Nervura had ever benefitted benefited anybody he knew of.

"`Well,' he said `it's benefitted benefited the Greene family considerably.'

He pointed over to the Castle, once, when I asked 57 him where he'd rather live (he had travelled all over the world)

"'Doesn't that answer your questions' he said, 'do you think I'd put $60,000 or $80,000 into that place if I didn't prefer to live there?'

"Dr. Greene.....Dr. J.A...I mean, he had a brother, Dr. [?] F . E....was about the slickest talker I ever heard. He used to go around giving stereopticon lectures.... had pictures of the human body...bones, stomach, nerves, such like--and he could fill a hall, anywhere, anytime.

"I recall one time when he went to Boson and hired a big place to give one of his lectures in. Dr. F.E. and I went with him. Came time for the lecture... almost time...and there was hardly a corporal's guard in the place.

"'There, I told you you were a big fool to hire this big hall', fussed Dr. F. E., 'you've lost your money.'

"Dr. J.A. sat back stage, puffing on a cigar, which he removed long enough to remark.

"'I'll fill it...I'll fill it...don't you fret... when the time comes, I'll fill it.' and he went on calmly smoking.

"Dr. F. E. kept running to the peepholes in the drop.

"'There isn't anybody out there; 'he'd report, 'nobody coming in.'

"'Don't worry. I'll fill it..you'll see..I'll fill it.'

"Along the last they came pouring in; when it was time for the lecture there wasn't standing room.

"Dr. Greene was a great figure in New Hampshire, in his prime. He and his brother bought out the Hotel Weirs before I had been there long, enlarged it tremendously...added ninety feet on to the dining room, alone...and changed the name to "The New Hotel Weirs." But they wanted me to keep on managing it for them.

"We had a lot of great times there..with Dr. Greene.

"The Belknap County Fair at Laconia was a great time for Dr. Greene. He had Carrie Nation,...yes, hatchet and all...out there, once, for advertising. He spent a pile of money on advertising. And while Carrie was there the town was hers...as much of it as Dr. Greene's money could buy.

"Speaking of Carrie Nation...Admiral Schley was at the Weirs at the same time, with his wife, his son, and his son's wife. They were not stopping at the hotel but he used to come in...sit on the piazza... quite often. We became pretty well acquainted.

"Carrie Nation buttonholed me once on the grounds.. ..wanted to be introduced to the admiral.

"'I think it would be better,' I told her, 'to find out first whether the admiral is willing to see you; I'll ask him.'

"I went up into the grandstand where the admiral was watching the performances, and asked him.

"'Who? Carrie Nation, Faugh!' He made a very expressive sweep with his arm. I sat meekly down by his side and said no more.

"Very fond of good stories, was Admiral Schley. His wife didn't seem to think so much of some of his stories, but any good one made a hit with the Admiral. Dockstadter's Minstrels was one of his favorite entertainments when he was in New York.

"'.....and the end man said to the interlocutor, 'Why is a little dog, sitting on the railroad tracks with his tail cut off....why is it a wholesale dog?'

"'Why is it a wholesale dog?...why is it a... why....well, why is it a wholesale dog?'

"`Because it can can't be re-tailed.'

"The admiral would laugh over those stories... funny how those worthless little things will stick in a man's memory,isn't it?

"I said to him one time, when we were sitting on the piazza, looking over Lake Winnipesaukee.

"'Admiral, you can sit here and pretend you are watching for that Spanish fleet to come out, out there.'

"'Ah, that't it,' he replied, 'the everlasting waiting...waiting...waiting...watching. That's what gets on a man's nerves....the suspense. When the enemy finally comes out, and action begins, you don't think anything about it.'

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"They wanted to honor him at the fair so they presented him with a handsome clock. In replying the admiral drew himself up:

"'This is an occasion to be doubly honored..it happens to be the anniversary of our marriage.....'

"'Isn't he the biggest liar;' laughed Mrs. Schley under her breath, to me, 'we weren't married anywhere near this day. '

"But I guess I'm off my track; I was talking about Carrie Nation. They had her out at the Buffalo fair, later.

"I remember Dr. Greene coming down by the hotel one morning...spanking team he had...all rigged out. He called to me:

"'Willis, I'm one my way down to the depot to buy tickets for Buffalo. I'm going to buy two tickets. ..or three, whichever you say.'

"'Why, I don't know anything about your business ...how do I know what you want?'

"'Two tickets...or, three..which shall it be?'

"'I don't know...don't you know what you want?'

"'Two tickets....or .....three?' And, I gosh, he sat there throwing that at me until I said, "'You mean you want me to go with you? No I don't want to go.'

"'Two tickets...or, three?'

"'No, I can't travel in your crowd...I haven't money enough.'

"'Oh, pshaw! That don't need to worry you.'

"'You really want me to go?'

"'Of course I want you to go.'

"'Well, make it three, then.'

"We went, Dr. Greene, his wife, and I. His wife's sister got on a Ayer. About the first thing we noticed at the Fair was a poster announcing the appearance of Carrie Nation.

"'You suppose that's the real Carrie?' wondered the doctor.

"'We can tell pretty easy,' said I.

"Into the place where Carrie was advertised to be, we went. But no Carrie. Everything else came on the stage...but no Carrie.

"Told you 'twas a fake...knew it,' blurted doctor, disgusted. I called a young fellow, scurrying around the place, and asked him.

"'Yes, sir, she's here. She's been on, a little while ago; it's pretty near time for her, again,now; you watch that door,' pointing, 'and you'll see Carrie Nation come out there.'

"Sure enough, in a few minutes, out came Carrie.

"She hadn't more than got fairly out when Dr. Greene rushed up to the platform.

"'Hello, Carrie,' he burst out, right before the crowd; 'remember me, don't you?'

"She looked a little blank...tried to remember.

"'Is it---is it...let me see...Brown?'

"'No, no; don't you remember Laconia, New Hampshire?'

"'Oh, sure, I do,' Her face lighted up. ' [?] It's Dr. Greene.'

"Pleased as a boy, the doctor shook hands with her.

"'Carrie; the town's yours...the whole town's yours.'

"'Wait till I get through here, and I'll go with you.'

"We all set out together.

"'You know, Doctor, they don't believe...a lot of them don't....that I'm the real Carrie Nation. They think I'm a fake...dressed up to imitate Carrie. I wish you'd tell them I am the real Carrie.'

"And [?] by gosh, he did...took her by the arm, walked her right out into the midway, and gave her an introduction. He made a slick talk for her...gave her a send-off.

"But didn't he get a dressing down from Mrs. Greene!

"'How you looked out there...like a common barker... a disgrace!' Oh, she gave him a good combing down.

"When Dr. Greene decided to run for Congress from this state he went into it with all the characteristic methods of his advertising. He had Jim French for manager of his campaign....and plenty of money to backhim.

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"'Willis,' he told me one day,' I'm going to give the boys a banquet at the hotel...big affair.. can you manage it?'

"'How many?'

"'We'll make it for a hundred, I guess.'

"'That won't worry me any,' I told him.

"Next day he revised the list.

"'Make it for a hundred and twenty-five.'

"The list kept on growing. Next day it was a hundred and fifty; two or three days after that it was three hundred; in a week more it was five hundred.

"'Think you can do it, Willis . ? ? I want it pretty slick.'

"'Twon't worry me any; the man over there in the Castle'-- gesturing toward Long Island--' is doing all the worrying.'

Dr. F.E. came around...he was more of the timid kind than Dr.J.A. ...worried.

"'Think you can manage it..pretty big affair, you know.'

"My answer was always the same.

"'Fellow over there in the Castle's doing all the worrying.'

"'Forgot all about the band I've got coming,' Dr. Greene burst in, a day or two after he had set five hundred as the limit,' You'll have to make it twenty-five more.'

"I got me a fellow I thought would make a pretty slick-haired head waiter...combed the country around for waitresses...fifty-six we finally had, took down the portieres which hung in the archways dividing off sections of the big dining rooms and set tables right through the whole length. Off on one side we had a smaller room for the family and intimates.

"That slick-haired boy had those fifty-six girls all tangled up in no time. I fired him and asked my wife, here, if she could take hold and straighten things out. She thought she could, and, by gosh, she did..slicker 'n a whistle.

"We had everything sizzling when I heard the band strike up down by the depot. I looked out. There was the crowd, coming from the train, the band in the lead, marching in formation, Dr. Greene at the head, marching ...tum-tum-de-tum....tarrrrrr-umph- tum-tum. - up to the hotel.

"We had them seated and things coming on, slicker'n grease...thanks to her,' nodding toward his wife,' everything going without a hitch.

"Dr. Greene would sidle up.

"'How're things going? Worried any, Willis?'

"'Not a mite...take more'n a thing like this to worry me any.'

"Then Dr. F.E. came around.

"'Worried any, Willis? This is a pretty big thing, you know'.

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"Then George Armstrong..then another..and another..all worrying over the banquet..Jim French, and all of them.

"But it went over without a hitch.. : . perfect.

"After it was all over George W. Armstrong came to me.

"'Signed up with Greene for another year?'

"'No, not yet.'

"'I've got anyone of three jobs you can have,- the restaurant at Boston,..Worcester...or Springfield, if you'll come with me.'

"But I didn't go.

"'What's that? Did Dr. Greene get elected to Congree Congress ? No...lost out by three votes!'

"Doctor Greene was elected mayor of Laconia afterward.

"No, no, no...I was never in the army. That title of 'Colonel' you've noticed was given me by Dr. Greene... thought 'twould put me on a level with the G.A.R. I don't think they liked it very well....but it stuck. I even get letters to-day addressed to 'Colonel' F.C.Willis.

"You've probably noticed, as we've been talking about those old times and the men that moved around in them, that there was a different spirit among them than seems to be among people to-day. As I look back, there was more helpfulness toward one another...less jealous competition..not so much gouging into the business of the other man.

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"Take those old-time hotel men...they acted as if there was lots of room and plenty of business for all of them. Of course I know the cabins, and the trailers, and the tea-rooms, and the tourists' homes on every street, have cut terribly into the hotel business. There's more excuse for fighting one another, now....I know.

"But it wasn't so then; plenty of room for all the hotels we had in the mountains. There was Bethlehem... the Profile House, with right around five hundred rooms... The Flume House....the New Hotel Weirs...and lots of smaller ones.

"There was Richard Taft, one of the pioneers.... and Charles H. Greenleaf...of the Profile House... knew them well. Speaking of them recalls a story which Seth Ford told me about those two, years ago...illustrates what I've been saying. " Seth Ford was the oldest stage driver among the lot of them that drove into the Profile House, in my memory. He told me

that, as a young man, Charles Greenleaf used to work for Richard Taft, as clerk, or some such office position. He was such a competent young fellow that Mr. Taft offered to take him into partnership. Greenleaf accepted.

"The next season [?] was a poor one in the mountains.. about everybody lost money....Taft and Greenleaf among the rest... hit pretty hard. Greenleaf's share of the 67 business wasn't anywhere near equal to his previous salary, working at his old job. He was pretty well discouraged...wished he'd known enough to have stayed in his old job...and all that.

His downheartedness came to Mr. Taft's attention. He called Greenleaf in.

"'I understand,' he told him, that you're feeling pretty blue...all discouraged over what you got out of this year's business.'

"Greenleaf owned up to it, and explained why.

"'Well, Mr. Greenleaf, you mustn't let one poor season discourage you; we, all, have to stand losses, once in a while. That's part of doing business. We more'n make up for it in the good seasons, and there's more good seasons than bad.'

"But Greenleaf couldn't just see it that way.

"'Now,' offered Mr. Taft, 'if you would rather come back into your old job, and have your regular pay...I'll take you back.'

"Greenleaf jumped at the chance.

"But afterwards when he'd had a chance to see how things worked out he wanted to go back into partnership with Mr. Taft, and he took him in again. They formed the Profile and Flume Hotels Company. That's what Seth Ford told me. Of course that was before my day.

"I can't remember back to a time when this state 68 was not a prohibition state..always was, so far as my recollection goes. But I always kept liquor in my hotels, for the guests...except the Hotel Windham, at Bellows Falls, and at York Beach, in Maine.

"There were never any drunks in my hotels. People years back knew how to use liquor, at least the class of folks which came to my hotels did. They weren't liquor hogs; didn't try to run the glasses over, to get a spoonful more. One drink was enough...or, perhaps, two, if there was two or three together.

"And I was very careful who I sold to. If a man came around who was known to be inclined to drink too much, I'd say, "'Bar's closed.'

"I was never even spoken to about handling liquor. We carried, in the sample rooms, about all kinds of wines and cordials; whiskeys, gins, beer. We didn't sell much beer, though...not much demand for it. I mixed the drinks myself. I never had a bartender until along the last of my being in the hotel business. But I never drank...except very occasionally, when it was necessary to be social. I smoked, though. You see, I love a pipe now. But I never smoked anything but cigars in my hotels. Fellow in those summer hotels has to be pretty careful about appearances.

"I guess somebody tried to have some fun with me, once, at the Weirs. There was a big crowd around that day...Old Home Week, I think...or some such occasion... 69 ..and I was tipped off that I was going to be raided, at the hotel...deputy sheriff tipped me off, I think.

"I took the precaution of going to Judge Charles Stone.

"'What's the fine this year, on selling liquor?' I asked him.

"' On whiskey...hard-liquor...about $35 or $40... beer, less...about $5 or $10,' he told me.

"But they didn't raid me, after all.

"And the dogs in the dining rooms...another thing we had to be careful about. It got so I had to make strict rules about.

"A woman came in one day, to dinner. She had a dog on a string. The head waiter stopped her as she was entering the dining room.

"'Our rules forbid dogs in the dining rooms Madam: sorry.'

"Her dudgeon was up at once.

"'You mean to say I can't take my dog into the dining room with me? He's just as good as I am...he won't make a bit of trouble.'

"'Very [?] sorry , madam; our rules won't allow it. The porter will take your dog, and take very good care of it while you are in the dining room but it can't go in [there?]'

"'Well, I'll see the proprietor.'

"She came to me.

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"'The head waiter is right,' I told her; 'you see, you might be one who wouldn't object to dogs in the dining room; there might he a hundred more who would, so we've had to make very rigid rules.'

"And my dog can't go in?'

"'No, madam, sorry.'

"'Well, if my dog can't go in there, I won't go; I won't go anywhere my dog can't go.'

"'That madam, is entirely up to you...I have explained [??] our rules .'

She went off; her nose very high in the air.

"The cabins and the automobile trailers have come in since my day. And they've put a hole in the hotel business, as I knew it. I don't know very much about it. I was up here above Plymouth at Camp City a short time ago. A man who looked like he could afford any accomodations he wanted was hiring a cabin for the night. That told me a lot about what's happening to the hotel business. But somebody else will have to tell about that..I've talked about the old-time hotel business...so much I guess you're pretty tired."